

## **Discussion of the Ruskin Report Comparability of Coursework and the Equivalency Process**

**March 2010**

### **Introduction**

This agenda item presents the report to the Governor, Legislature, and Secretary of Education on *Comparability of Coursework for Sponsors of Special Education Teacher Preparation Programs as required by AB 2226 (Chap. 233, Stats. 2008)*. The report contains recommended guidelines for the sponsors of special education teacher preparation programs to use in determining the comparability of coursework and/or field experience completed in other Commission-accredited programs to coursework and/or field experience required in special education programs.

When the report was presented to the Commission, staff was directed to bring the report to the COA to discuss how the report might be used as a model for assisting all types of educator preparation programs determine equivalency of coursework.

### **Staff Recommendation**

This is an information item.

### **Background**

AB 2226 (Chap. 233, Stats 2008) required the Commission to convene a workgroup to develop guidelines for sponsors of special education teacher preparation programs to use in determining the comparability of coursework and/or field experience completed in other Commission-accredited programs to coursework and/or field experience required in special education programs. The intent is to help program sponsors as they advise candidates for Special Education Teacher preparation and to help program sponsors develop formal, structured, and consistent process for reviewing the comparability of coursework and previous experience.

The Commission workgroup completed their task and the Commission discussed and adopted the report at its January 28, 2010 meeting. The report was subsequently transmitted to the Governor, Legislature, and Secretary of Education. In its discussion, several members of the Commission noted that this document could provide a model for other credential programs in considering equivalency in coursework and previous experience and directed the Commission staff to discuss this possibility with the COA.

To begin this discussion of providing guidance in determining equivalency to all preparation programs, not just those offering Education Specialist programs, the COA may wish to focus on (1) the principles contained in the report, (2) the glossary of terms, and (3) the appeals and verification process.

### Principles to Guide Comparability Processes

To help Education Specialist programs understand how options for determining equivalency might be demonstrated within individual preparation programs, the Workgroup began its task by creating a series of principles to guide comparability processes and decisions to be made by program sponsors. These principles are presented below.

- Decisions regarding comparability should be at the discretion of the program sponsor. It is important to note that there are no Commission-approved policies that restrict the authority of program sponsors to make decisions about issues such as equivalence, articulation, and comparability, as these terms are defined below.
- Program sponsors have a broad range of possibilities for data in considering evidence for comparability. For example, program sponsors can consider coursework, professional development, work experience, and life experience. Program sponsors have complete discretion over the range of evidence that may be considered.
- Evaluations of the evidence for comparability do not have to be based on a course-credit model. Evaluations should be evidence-based and reflect the current Commission-approved standards for education specialist credentials. The Commission does not require approved program sponsors to document units completed when recommending a candidate for an earned credential; however, program sponsors must keep a record of the evidence and decisions that address the candidate's competence in relation to the standards.
- For candidates simultaneously pursuing a degree in addition to earning a credential, approved program sponsors use their own institutional processes and procedures for course credit evaluations. However, this does not preclude sponsors from also conducting non-course credit, standards-based evaluations with respect to a candidate for the purpose of earning a credential.
- The evaluation process should be guided by the principles of candidate "friendliness" and candidate responsibility. There should be written directions for candidates to apply for evaluation from the program sponsor. Those directions should include any disclaimers that might impact a candidate's decision about ultimately completing a credential with that program sponsor; for example, requirements to complete a minimum number of course units prior to being recommended for a credential should be clearly explained.
- The burden of retrieving, organizing, and reflecting on the evidence provided for evaluation lies with the candidate.
- The comparability evaluation process should be rigorous and labor intensive. Program sponsors may use their established institutional processes to recover appropriate costs to conduct evaluations.

*Question for the COA:*

Are the Guiding Principles developed by the Workgroup appropriate for all types of educator preparation programs? If not, how should they be revised or changed to be applicable to the broad array of educator preparation programs?

*Glossary of Terms*

The group also developed a glossary defining terms related to comparability so that program sponsors would be consistent in their application of the principles that used these terms. The glossary developed by the Special Education Workgroup is presented below.

- *Articulation agreement*: written agreement between one sponsor/preparer and another to accept the coursework and/or fieldwork of the offering agency.
- *Reciprocity*: a mutual agreement among sponsors/preparers/authorities to accept unconditionally each other's coursework/fieldwork/professional learning experiences.
- *Equivalence*: the determination that a given set of knowledge, skills, and abilities as reflected in standards have been met through coursework/fieldwork/prior learning experiences as determined by an evaluation process.
- *Comparability*: the determination that a candidate has demonstrated the essence of the set of knowledge, skills or abilities required by a particular Commission program standard through another route.
- *Prior Learning Assessment*: a process through which a person develops a portfolio of life experiences and/or training/preparation experiences that establish the basis for meeting the appropriate standard(s).
- *Waiver*: a document issued by the Commission on request from an employing agency when a candidate lacks a credential requirement, for example, basic skills. **Note:** The term "waiver" is not an appropriate term with reference to evaluating candidates for equivalence/comparability.
- *Concurrent Enrollment*: Enrollment in more than one institution at the same time. Please see each institution's catalog for concurrent enrollment policies.
- *Program sponsor*: Any university-based or local education agency-based program approved by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

*Question for the COA:*

Is the Glossary developed by the Workgroup appropriate for use with all types of educator preparation programs? If not, in what ways should it be changed to be applicable to the broad array of educator preparation programs?

Finally, the Workgroup proposed a verification and appeals processes for determining equivalency.

### Verification and Appeals Process

Page 6 and 7 of the report provides guidance with respect to verification, recency of experience, and the development and implementation of an appeals process.

### Question for the COA:

Does the verification and appeals process described on pages 6 and 7 of the report need any modification in order for them to be applicable for use with all types of educator preparation programs?

### Format of the Guidance to Education Preparation Programs

The attached report was required by AB 2226 to be developed and submitted to the Governor, Legislature and Secretary of Education. It would be helpful, in addition to the specific questions identified above, for the COA to have a discussion on the type of guidance and the format of the guidance for all other types of educator preparation programs.

### **Next Steps**

Based on the COA discussion of each of the questions above, staff will bring another agenda item on the topic for further discussion.



# Comparability of Coursework for Sponsors of Special Education Teacher Preparation Programs

*Report to the Governor, Legislature, and Secretary  
of Education as Required by AB 2226  
(Chap. 233, Stats. 2008)*

January 2010

This report was developed by staff of the Professional Services Division of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing. For more information about the content of this report, contact [j-joneswadsworth@ctc.ca.gov](mailto:j-joneswadsworth@ctc.ca.gov).

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# **Comparability of Coursework for Sponsors of Special Education Teacher Preparation Programs**

## **Table of Contents**

Preamble .....	1
Glossary of Terminology Used in This Report.....	2
Methods of Providing Equivalency.....	3
Comparability Options .....	3
Evidence-Based Standards.....	3
Flexible Enrollment.....	4
Program Sponsor Agreements .....	4
Articulated Agreements .....	4
Comparability and Equivalency .....	4
Prior Learning Assessment .....	4
Overview of the Prior Learning Assessment Process.....	4
Prior Learning Assessment with Essay.....	5
Prior Learning Assessment without Essay.....	5
Performance Learning Plan .....	5
Verification/Monitoring of Work by Program Sponsor.....	6
Recency of Work Requirement.....	6
Appeals Process.....	7
Staff Appeals.....	7
Commission Appeals.....	7
Resources .....	8
Appendix A      Samples of Acceptable Documentation for Portfolios.....	9
Appendix B      Samples of Scenarios for Reference Use.....	10
Appendix C      Copy of Assembly Bill 2226 .....	16
Appendix D      Membership of the Special Education Program Comparability Workgroup ...	17



## **Preamble**

In response to AB 2226 (Chap. 233, Stats. 2008), the Commission convened a workgroup for the purpose of providing guidance to programs in determining the comparability of coursework and/or field experience completed in other Commission-accredited programs to requirements of special education programs. The statute specifies that the findings of the workgroup are to be reported to the Legislature, the Governor, and the Secretary of Education.

In discussing possible guidelines for comparability, the Workgroup established by the Commission identified several key principles to facilitate the work, as follows:

- Decisions regarding comparability should be at the discretion of the program sponsor. It is important to note that there are no Commission-approved policies that restrict the authority of program sponsors to make decisions about issues such as equivalence, articulation, and comparability, as these terms are defined below.
- Program sponsors have a broad range of possibilities for data in considering evidence for comparability. For example, program sponsors can consider coursework, professional development, work experience, and life experience. Program sponsors have complete discretion over the range of evidence that may be considered.
- Evaluations of the evidence for comparability do not have to be based on a course-credit model. Evaluations should be evidence-based and reflect the current Commission-approved standards for education specialist credentials. The Commission does not require approved program sponsors to document units completed when recommending a candidate for an earned credential; however, program sponsors must keep a record of the evidence and decisions that address the candidate's competence in relation to the standards.
- For candidates simultaneously pursuing a degree in addition to earning a credential, approved program sponsors use their own institutional processes and procedures for course credit evaluations. However, this does not preclude sponsors from also conducting non-course credit, standards-based evaluations with respect to a candidate for the purpose of earning a credential.
- The evaluation process should be guided by the principles of candidate "friendliness" and candidate responsibility. There should be written directions for candidates to apply for evaluation from the program sponsor. Those directions should include any disclaimers that might impact a candidate's decision about ultimately completing a credential with that program sponsor; for example, requirements to complete a minimum number of course units prior to being recommended for a credential should be clearly explained.
- The burden of retrieving, organizing, and reflecting on the evidence provided for evaluation lies with the candidate.

- The comparability evaluation process should be rigorous and labor intensive. Program sponsors may use their established institutional processes to recover appropriate costs to conduct evaluations.

## **Glossary of Terminology Used in This Report**

- *Articulation agreement*: written agreement between one sponsor/preparer and another to accept the coursework and/or fieldwork of the offering agency.
- *Reciprocity*: a mutual agreement among sponsors/preparers/authorities to accept unconditionally each other's coursework/fieldwork/professional learning experiences.
- *Equivalence*: the determination that a given set of knowledge, skills, and abilities as reflected in standards have been met through coursework/fieldwork/prior learning experiences as determined by an evaluation process.
- *Comparability*: the determination that a candidate has demonstrated the essence of the set of knowledge, skills or abilities required by a particular Commission program standard through another route.
- *Prior Learning Assessment*: a process through which a person develops a portfolio of life experiences and/or training/preparation experiences that establish the basis for meeting the appropriate standard(s).
- *Waiver*: a document issued by the Commission on request from an employing agency when a candidate lacks a credential requirement, for example, basic skills. **Note:** The term "waiver" is not an appropriate term with reference to evaluating candidates for equivalence/comparability.
- *Concurrent Enrollment*: Enrollment in more than one institution at the same time. Please see each institution's catalog for concurrent enrollment policies.
- *Program sponsor*: Any university-based or local education agency-based program approved by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

## Methods of Providing Equivalency

### Comparability Options

The following are non-restrictive examples of options which may be used to verify competency met by the candidate:

- Examination results inclusive of the specialty area that verify the competency of the candidate.
- A portfolio containing specified types of entries that demonstrate the knowledge, skills and abilities reflective of the specific credential sought by the candidate.
- A Performance Narrative addressing three components to include: Personal background information; Academic background specific to the credential sought; Classroom experience and performance including evaluative information, parent interactions, and collaborative skills and experiences with teaching peers and administrators.
- Field experience documentation reflecting a variety of observational reports addressing the spectrum of the disability area of the credential sought including the candidate's ability to modify or accommodate the state curriculum standards to meet student needs and the ability and skills to meet the social/emotional needs of the specific, special needs student.
- A video (submitted with appropriate permissions) which includes representations of classroom methodologies, management, scope and sequencing of curriculum and social interactions with students.
- A transcript that provides sufficient information regarding course content, catalog descriptions, course syllabi, or a matrix identifying variations of course offerings across content areas.
- A Prior Learning Assessment which contains a descriptive narrative of the candidate's personal involvement in one or more of the following: 1) Life Experiences; 2) Work Experiences; 3) Paraprofessional Experience; 4) Parenting.
- A Review Board Process, which may be used by the Program Sponsor to examine the background of the candidate knowledge presented, along with its application in the specific, special needs classroom.

Options for verification may include all or part of the above categories as a written record to verify and monitor the completion of program requirements.

### Evidence-based Standards

If a candidate directly presents evidence to the program sponsor for comparability in meeting specific credential requirements, the following guidelines should prevail:

- The candidate should present information based on current, adopted California credential standards as appropriate to the specific credential sought.
- As written agreements are formulated between the candidate and the Program Sponsor, such agreements must be evidence-based as appropriate to the specific, credential standard requested for equivalence. Teacher Performance Expectations (TPEs) should be used as evidence-based criteria in the verification option of fieldwork experiences.
- Evaluative information presented by the candidate must be in line with the *California Standards for the Teaching Profession*.

### Flexible Enrollment

Flexible enrollment should be considered for candidates who need minimal work to complete a credential program. Program sponsors should explore alternatives for candidate enrollment in the program. These alternatives include but are not limited to visitor status, concurrent enrollment, open university, county/district programs or through university extension programs, and professional development activities.

Flexible enrollment may be used to assist individuals who need prerequisite work to enter a credential program, may need one or two classes to complete a program, or may have relocated and need work to complete their program at the recommending program sponsor. In some cases the only option for the candidate may be use of the Commission's CL-666 Form - Institution's Evaluation for Staff Appeal (RGA-16), used by institutions.

### **Program Sponsor Agreements**

Program sponsors may take advantage of their frequent collaborations to formalize broad or limited written agreements concerning comparability of coursework and/or fieldwork. Such agreements may be created to meet the needs of individual programs or individual candidates. In some cases program sponsors may agree to accept work completed at another program as comparable. In this case a formal agreement might not be necessary.

#### *Articulated Agreements*

Articulated agreements indicate that the courses taken at one institution or through a given program sponsor are transferable to another institution or program sponsor as indicated in the agreement. Articulated agreements may include: community college and four year institutions, or four year institutions and/or local program sponsors and institutions of higher education. Articulated agreements may involve the components of the preliminary and/or clear credentials. These agreements may be created at the system level or at the local level.

#### *Comparability and Equivalency*

Program sponsors may unilaterally decide to accept coursework and/or fieldwork from other program sponsors. A program may evaluate the content of a candidate's course of study and fieldwork from another program, plus other life experiences of the candidate and determine the candidate's knowledge, skills and abilities to be comparable or equivalent to those required by the recommending sponsor. The candidate's program and/or experiences may have been completed within California, in another state, or at an institution from another country.

### **Prior Learning Assessment**

#### *Overview of the Prior Learning Assessment Process*

Prospective candidates may be able to gain recognition and credit for their life and learning experiences through a process called "Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)." As adult learners, these prospective candidates may have acquired knowledge through "experiential learning" that is equivalent to what is taught in a college classroom. This experiential learning may have been attained from a variety of sources such as a job/career, volunteer work, self-study, or courses taken in a non-traditional college setting. Granting of equivalencies that meet credential or authorization standards and/or fieldwork requirements through PLA involves the candidate's

developing a portfolio or other verification options that organize the candidate's learning experiences in a manner that can be evaluated for comparability.

Through the Prior Learning Assessment process, the candidates have an opportunity to demonstrate how their experiences and learning are comparable to what is required by the standards. Two distinct methods are available to demonstrate their learning: submission of a portfolio with essay or submission of a portfolio without an essay. The following provides an overview of the differences between the two and illustrates which PLA process is appropriate for the candidate's knowledge and experience.

#### *Prior Learning Assessment with Essay*

The portfolio is developed based on required standards for the credential. The portfolio will include an essay demonstrating evidence-based learning activities that meet the required Commission standards through the experiential learning. Portfolios are evaluated to determine whether the candidate's experiential learning (knowledge) is equivalent to the standard being submitted with the portfolio.

Note: Meeting the equivalent course requirements for knowledge gained is not given for seat time or for having had the experience itself. For example, attending a four-week training program does not guarantee that the candidate has learned what was taught in the program. Instead, the candidate needs to provide evidence that he/she gained the knowledge.

#### *Prior Learning Assessment without Essay:*

The portfolio is developed based on required standards that the candidate completed outside of a traditional, college classroom. The experiential learning activity being submitted should have the following characteristics:

- Required learning outcomes are stated and assessment of performance is provided.
- The experiential learning content is demonstrably equivalent to the Commission standards.
- Printed documentation is provided of the learning objectives, delivery method, and information about the instructor or instructional methods.
- Sponsorship is documented to be by a qualified provider.

### **Performance Learning Plan**

Prior to beginning to develop a portfolio, the candidate would meet with a program advisor to discuss ideas for participating in the Prior Learning Assessment process. The advisor would review the candidate's pre-evaluation of experiential learning activities/experiences. Once approved for proceeding to the Prior Learning Assessment process, the Program Advisor will document the approval of pre-experiential learning activities.

## **Verification/Monitoring of Work by Program Sponsor**

This section outlines the process for the Program Sponsor to verify and monitor completion of program requirements, including any attempts by the candidate to meet requirements through an articulation agreement, equivalency and comparability.

There should be an overall program completion form to document all requirements and their completion, which will be signed by the candidate, the advisor, the program coordinator (or designee).

Upon evaluating a credential candidate's prior course work and experiences a Candidate Completion Plan (CCP) could be prepared. This plan would delineate the course work and/or fieldwork the candidate must complete in order to be recommended for the credential. The plan would be filed with the Program Sponsor and a copy kept by the candidate. The plan should include a timeline for completion. This information should be transmitted to the Credential Analyst/authorized signatory for inclusion in the candidate's file.

The authorization process is up to the discretion of the program sponsor, but in order to have reliability, the process should be outlined on a CCP that has more than one designated signature. The written record is ultimately submitted to the credential analyst. Program sponsors are responsible for the ongoing reliability and validity of the process.

## **Recency of Work Requirement**

When applying to the Commission for program approval, a program sponsor will describe its process for determining how recency of work will be considered when determining a candidate's "challenge" to meeting a Commission required standard.

The program sponsor needs to have policies and guidelines in place to determine if recency of work is relevant and if the work is sufficiently up to date to verify knowledge of the current statutes, research, practices and state standards.

The program sponsor will provide the candidate with a process form for demonstrating how recency of work relates to required standards for credential completion. The record of the process shall become part of the candidate's portfolio.

Program sponsors are encouraged to create a database of comparable coursework and fieldwork to facilitate the completion of credential programs.

## Appeals Process

Each program sponsor must have an appeals process in place. The appeals policy should address granting equivalencies and be provided in writing within admission forms and in the college catalog. Candidates must complete the local appeal process before submitting an appeal to the Commission.

### Individual Appeals Submitted to the Commission

Upon appeal, the Commission may issue a teaching or service credential or an extension to a credential to individuals who meet specific criteria. There are two types of appeals:

#### Staff Appeals

Commission staff may issue an extension or renew a credential or permit when an applicant verifies good cause for not completing renewal requirements. An appeal may be issued only once, except in cases where the extenuating circumstances continue to exist and the applicant has made sufficient progress toward completion of the requirements. All appeal extension applications are reviewed on an individual basis. Appeals are not granted if an applicant cannot show good cause or substantial reasons for the request. Financial hardship cannot be considered a valid reason for appeal.

#### *Examples of staff appeals*

- **New Requirement Added by Statute or Regulation:** The candidate was not informed of a new requirement and has completed all other requirements for the renewal of the credential.
- **Medical Appeal:** The candidate did not complete renewal requirements due to medical or health reasons affecting the applicant, family, or household member.
- **Failure to Complete Renewal Requirement(s):** The candidate did not complete renewal requirements and needs a one-year extension of the credential.
- **Program Sponsor Unable to Recommend for a Credential:** The candidate has completed all the requirements for a credential but the program sponsor is unable to recommend for the credential due to specific policies such as recency of coursework or residency coursework not completed.

#### Commission Appeals

The Commission has the authority to review actual teaching experience to seek equivalency to the student teaching component. Title 5, California Code of Regulations, sections 80505 through 80522 allow an applicant to appeal to the Commission on Teacher Credentialing for the purpose of finding “equivalency” of an individual’s teaching experience in lieu of the student teaching component. There are no provisions in Title 5 Regulations allowing the Commission to grant equivalency to coursework. All pertinent coursework such as methods, curriculum, and subject matter must be completed prior to filing for an appeal.

- The program sponsor must state it is unwilling or unable to supervise the candidate in a current paid teaching position. A full explanation from the program sponsor is required.
- Financial hardship is not a valid reason for an appeal.

- If the program sponsor is able to supervise the candidate in a current teaching position, the application will be denied by Commission staff as there shall be no basis for appeal.
- A minimum of three years of satisfactory teaching experience submitted in lieu of the student teaching component must be:
  - a. after completion of a baccalaureate degree;
  - b. concurrent with or after a professional teacher preparation program;
  - c. at the level and scope of the credential being sought; and
  - d. in the subject to be listed on the credential.

**Resources:**

Staff Appeals Extending the Term of a Credential or Permit:

<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/leaflets/al3.pdf>

Commission Appeals for Education Specialist Instruction Credentials:

<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/leaflets/cl760sm.pdf>

Contact Information:

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By email: [credentials@ctc.ca.gov](mailto:credentials@ctc.ca.gov)

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## Appendix A

### Samples of Acceptable Documentation for Portfolios

#### Acceptable Types of Documentation

Portfolios must include documentation that supports the activities and learning experiences described in written essays. This would include letters from employers verifying job responsibilities, and certificates of completion of any training or coursework. The following provides more information on acceptable types of documentation.

Type of Activity	Acceptable Documentation
Work Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job descriptions</li> <li>• Awards</li> <li>• Letters of collaboration from superiors, peers, clients</li> <li>• Performance standards for acquiring certifications</li> <li>• Samples of work produced</li> </ul>
Community Service Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commendations and awards</li> <li>• Newspaper and magazine clippings</li> <li>• Letters of collaboration from co-volunteers, clients served, supervisors</li> </ul>
Non-college Courses and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter attesting student was enrolled in course</li> <li>• Learning outcomes or objectives of course</li> <li>• Evidence of completion</li> <li>• Course description(s) outline(s)</li> <li>• Number of didactic hours</li> <li>• Number of clinical or practicum hours</li> <li>• Diplomas/Certifications</li> </ul>
Special Accomplishments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Books or articles published</li> <li>• Programs designed</li> <li>• Speeches given</li> <li>• Written samples</li> <li>• Audiovisual presentations</li> <li>• Proposals written</li> </ul>

## **Appendix B**

### **Samples of Scenarios for Reference Use**

#### **Introduction**

To help understand how these guidelines might be applied, fictitious scenarios have been prepared to illustrate situations in which they could be used.

#### **Scenario 1: School Counselor Becomes an Education Specialist: Mild/Moderate Disabilities**

James is a school counselor who is interested in becoming an education specialist for mild moderate disabilities. He has contacted the institution where he earned his pupil personnel services school counseling credential and inquired as to the process for making such a career change.

Rather than completing the process via phone and e-mail contacts, it was suggested that he contact the program coordinator for the Education Specialist Mild/Moderate credential to schedule an appointment and to determine a course of action.

In preparation for the appointment, James obtains copies of his transcripts and letters of support from his professional colleagues. He also drafts a personal statement and obtains letters verifying activities carried out in his role as a school counselor. He downloads and prints the course sequence for the Education Specialist: Mild/Moderate Credential as well as the courses he completed for his school counselor credential.

James meets with the Education Specialist: Mild/Moderate Credential program coordinator, Dr. Julia Duenas. James expresses his interest in changing professions and states that he hopes some of his coursework from his school counseling program as well as his work in the schools may be applied to his credential program.

Julia explains that there are several options open to him to demonstrate competency with respect to meeting the standards for the credential. She also explains that there are some requirements that are set by the state and are not negotiable.

Together Julia and James prepare an equivalency chart that represents the program requirements, prior coursework and experiences that may be applied towards meeting the standards for the credential. At the end of the review, they will create a Program Completion Plan for James. Should James choose to attend this institution, he would be responsible for the completion of the requirements as indicated on the plan. The institution will honor the commitments made to James as indicated on the plan.

### Sample Program Completion Plan

Requirements	Previously Met	Equivalencies	Need to Complete
<i>State</i>			
CSET			X
CBEST	X		
Constitution	X		
Certificate of Clearance	X		
RICA			X
<i>Program – Mild/Moderate Disabilities</i>			
Introduction to M/M Disabilities		X (previous coursework)	
Instructional Strategies			X
Assessment			X
Positive Behavior Support		X (employment)	
Collaboration/Consultation		X (employment)	
M/M Field Work (2 experiences)		X (1 experience/employment)	
Law/SST/IEP Process		X (previous coursework and employment)	
<i>General Education</i>			
Curriculum			X
Assessment			X
Reading			X
English Learners			X
Educational Psychology		X (previous coursework)	
Diversity		X (previous coursework/employment)	
Fieldwork		X (employment)	

At the end of the review of transcripts, letters of support, personal statement and response to interview questions the Personal Completion Plan was drafted. It requires that James supply additional information that further describes how his preparation for being a school counselor and his work as a school counselor enable him to meet the standards for the Education Specialist Mild/Moderate Disabilities Credential. James must also provide an elaborated description of his duties as a school counselor in order to obtain credit for fieldwork in mild/moderate disabilities.

An area of discussion between James and Julia was that of meeting the standards for knowledge and skills in general education, including English learners. James felt that his five years as a counselor for students at the elementary level should be ‘worth something’. Julia stated that if James could present sufficient evidence to demonstrate that he had met the specific standards, he could be able to obtain equivalencies. Julia reiterated that the candidate must demonstrate that he has met the standards on which courses are based.

James and Julia agreed to meet in three weeks. In three weeks James will present his evidence to demonstrate that he had met the content of the standards as indicated in the areas above where equivalencies are granted on the basis of employment. He will also present additional evidence

in order to convince Julia that some of the elements in the need to complete column should be moved to equivalencies column.

**Scenario 2: A teacher in a classroom for the severely handicapped who wants an Education Specialist: Physical and Other Health Impaired (PHI)**

Question submitted by candidate:

“I hold a Moderate/Severe credential and have been assigned to a classroom of low incidence students for the past 10 years. I am now interested in applying for a PHI credential based on my experience and some professional development provided by my school district. I live more than 150 miles from a program sponsor.

Do I apply directly to the Commission for this added authorization?”

Response:

Serving in an assignment (possible a misassignment by the school district) a number of years, does not constitute a verification of the overall understanding of students who have physical disabilities and their educational implications. However, through a comparability process, some background of experience and training may be applicable in meeting some of the requirements for a PHI credential, as is illustrated in the following examples:

1. Specific case studies that have been handled over the years, to demonstrate disability awareness in the PHI area.
  - a. Spina bifida
  - b. Cerebral palsy (ataxic and apraxic)
  - c. Post-polio
  - d. Quadriplegia
  - e. Paraplegia
2. Additional training in the area of fine and gross motor movements, positioning, range of motion, occupational and physical therapy, adaptive communication devices, and modified transportation through professional development activities offered by the school districts and professional organizations.
3. Has skills and knowledge in handling curriculum for students who are below grade level, at grade level and above grade level in all curriculum areas. This includes the adaptations and modifications of content information as well as knowledge of the expressive and receptive areas of communication of the special needs students.

Based on the above information provided, there are areas in the PHI added authorization which could be investigated. Future contact and conversation is recommended with a PHI program sponsor. Because of the distance from the program sponsor, it could be possible that some coursework is offered online.

### **Scenario 3: Education Specialist: Mild/Moderate Needs Added Authorization for Autism Spectrum Disorders**

Mrs. Johnson holds a Mild/Moderate credential and currently has a teaching assignment as a resource specialist in an elementary school. She wants to add an autism authorization to her current credential. After meeting with her county office of education (COE) credential analyst and determining that they can act as her program sponsor, Mrs. Johnson and the program sponsor representative review the standards required to complete the authorization.

During this discussion, Mrs. Johnson states that for the past five years she has been the case manager for several students with autism who are fully included in general education classes at her site. Her assignment requires her to evaluate their academic, social/emotional, motor, and self help skills, determine areas of need, and develop appropriate goals for each of the students. She provides direct services through push-in and pull-out programs and indirect services by offering and providing training to general education teachers and support personnel who work with the identified students. Mrs. Johnson has worked with parents and the school psychologist to develop behavior support plans (BSP) and has developed and implemented a social skills program for a number of her students.

The program sponsor agrees that these responsibilities meet many of the standards needed for the authorization. Mrs. Johnson collects samples of the Individualized Education Programs and BSPs she has developed, sample lesson plans and lesson evaluations from her social skills classes and letters from her principal as well as the school psychologist specifically addressing the standards Mrs. Johnson and the COE representative feel she has met. After reviewing the collected information, they determine that she has completed all but one of the required standards and can meet that final standard by taking one class offered by the COE's Commission-approved Autism Spectrum Disorder program.

### **Scenario 4: General Education Teacher Wants Credit Towards a Special Education Credential Authorization**

Jane Doe has been a successful 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher for ten years. Jane has developed a visual impairment that is easily accommodated with large print materials and technology and has no negative impact on her job. This impairment, however, has caused her to become interested in special education, so she makes an appointment with John Buck, a professor at the local university, to discuss getting a special education (SPED) credential. She walks into the meeting with transcripts in hand.

After discussing the program requirements with John, Jane asks if some of the coursework and fieldwork in the SPED program can be "waived," since she has another credential and has so much teaching experience. John explains that the term "waiver" is used only by the Commission; but if some equivalencies can be found between what she has done and the program requirements, and if Jane's prior work or life experience matches some of the program's coursework or fieldwork standards, John may be able to eliminate the requirement from her course of study.

Specifically, Jane felt she did not need to take the literacy course, the math course, the science course and the health course. They studied her transcripts together and saw that she took courses

for literacy, math and science but she took them over ten years ago. John asked her to supply the course syllabi in order to make a competency comparison between her past courses and our courses, but she was unable to do so. She had an undergrad major in health science, but that was over 16 years ago and, again, she was unable to provide any syllabi or coursework.

Consequently, they agreed that Jane could develop a portfolio of her teaching experiences involving literacy, math, science and health. The portfolio would include classroom photos, lesson plans, student work and a letter from her principal verifying its contents. She understood that John and the program coordinator would analyze the portfolio according to the course standards to determine comparability and document the process.

In the end they filled and out and signed an advising form documenting what courses she would take, what courses she might not have to take if her portfolio supports it and she is given a timeline for completion.

### **Scenario 5: Out-of-State High School Teacher with a Masters in Special Education Wants California Education Specialist: Mild/Moderate Authorization**

Jack moved to California from another state and wants to resume his teaching career, where he taught math to high school students with learning disabilities for five years. He worries that this is a complicated situation because he knows that, while his current state will allow him to teach in a special education program only requiring a Masters Degree in Special Education, California requires an Education Specialist Credential. He researches colleges on the internet and chooses XYZ University.

At the university, Jack meets with Dr. Jill to determine how to go about obtaining a California credential. During the process of reviewing Jack's transcripts, the first thing Dr. Jill discovers is that, unlike California, his state did not require that he pass assessments in order to demonstrate competence in basic skills, subject matter, reading, and cultural/linguistic diversity. She also realizes that he began his teaching with no fieldwork experience and did not take several courses that California requires. In addition, although he took a law course, he has no knowledge of the regulations that California has implemented in order to comply with Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004. Dr. Jill then says to Jack, "Which do you want first—the good news or the bad news?"

The bad news is that the university cannot grant equivalencies for requirements beyond their approved program. In other words, according to the Commission on Teacher Credentialing, all California teachers must meet the Basic Skills Requirement (BSR) and reading requirement (such as the Reading Instruction Competence Assessment - RICA). Thus, Jack will need to meet the BSR before entering into any California program. Jack may pass the RICA examination while in the program.

The good news is that Jack has an undergraduate degree in math, so he can likely meet the subject matter requirement through coursework or examination. If he had been an elementary teacher, he would have needed to pass the Multiple Subject CSET examination. Also, since Jack has all of his master's degree course syllabi and a portfolio of his teaching experiences, it will be possible to do a comparability assessment to match Jack's knowledge, skills and abilities related

to the required California standards for the credential courses and fieldwork. This assessment will also look for cultural/linguistic diversity competence. If the syllabi and portfolio do not provide enough detail, she will ask Jack to write a narrative to demonstrate in-depth knowledge.

Jack and Dr. Jill will meet again after she reviews his documents in order to develop a program completion plan to determine what courses and experiences he will need to complete. Jack goes home a happy man.

# **Appendix C**

## **Assembly Bill 2226**

### CHAPTER 233

An act to add Section 44265.2 to the Education Code, relating to teachers.

[Approved by Governor August 1, 2008. Filed with Secretary of State August 1, 2008.]

#### Legislative Counsel's Digest

AB 2226, Ruskin. Teachers: special education teacher preparation programs: comparability of coursework.

Existing law establishes in state government the Commission on Teacher Credentialing, and authorizes the commission to issue teaching and services credentials, including a special education credential. Existing law authorizes the commission to approve any institution of higher education to recommend the issuance of credentials to persons who have successfully completed a teacher education program.

This bill would require the commission to convene a workgroup for the purpose of providing guidance to programs in determining the comparability of coursework or field experience completed in other commission-accredited programs to special education programs. The bill would require the commission to report the findings of the workgroup to the Legislature, the Governor, and the Secretary for Education on or before December 1, 2009.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

SECTION 1. The Legislature encourages a public or private institution of higher education or a local educational agency that conducts a commission-accredited program of professional preparation for the education specialist credential in special education to accept coursework or field experience completed in another commission-accredited preparation program if the coursework or field experience is determined by the institution or agency to be comparable.

SEC. 2. Section 44265.2 is added to the Education Code, to read:

44265.2. (a) The commission shall convene a workgroup of interested parties including, but not limited to, representatives of the California State University, the University of California, private postsecondary institutions of higher education, local educational agencies, and organizations that represent public school educators, for the purpose of providing guidance to programs in determining the comparability of coursework or field experience completed in other commission-accredited programs to special education programs.

(b) The commission shall report the workgroup's findings to the Legislature, the Governor, and the Secretary for Education on or before December 1, 2009.



## Appendix D

### Membership of the Special Education Program Comparability Workgroup

<b><u>Workgroup Members</u></b>	<b><u>Affiliation</u></b>	<b><u>Program Sponsor</u></b>
Lanna Andrews	University of San Francisco	Private, Independent Colleges
Angela (Angie) Hawkins	Advisory Commission on Special Education	Local Education Agency
Merilee Johnson	CCSESA (Glenn COE)	Local Education Agency
Kathy Kinley	CSBA (Chaffey JUSD HSD)	Local Education Agency
Michael Lewis	CSU Chancellor's Office	California State University
Christine Mink	CFT (Morgan Hill Unified)	Organization of Educators
David Raske	CSU Sacramento	California State University
Linda Smetana	CSU East Bay	California State University
Ray Vincent	ACSA (Los Angeles Co. Office of Education.)	Organization of Educators
Athena Waite	CTC (UC Riverside)	University of California
<b><u>Commission Staff</u></b>		
Michael McKibbin	Professional Services Division	
Jan Jones Wadsworth	Professional Services Division	
Terri Fesperman	Certification, Assignment and Waivers Division	